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U.S. Naval Forces Central Command - U.S. FIFTH Fleet

December 25, 2003

Decatur Crew Captures Possible Al-Qaida Associated Drug-smuggling Dhow in Gulf

USS Enterprise Public Affairs

ABOARD USS ENTERPRISE - A U.S. Navy boarding team operating from the guided-missile destroyer USS Decatur (DDG 73) discovered an estimated two tons of narcotics with a street value of around eight to ten million dollars aboard a 40-foot dhow intercepted in the Arabian Gulf on Dec. 15, at approximately 11:00 a.m. The dhow's 12 crewmembers were taken into custody and transferred to Decatur, and Decatur sailors are in control of the dhow. The smuggling routes are known to be used by Al-Qaida and three of the 12 crew members are believed to have links to the organization.

Decatur was operating near the Strait of Hormuz, conducting Expanded Maritime Interception Operations designed to deny use of the seas by terrorists and smugglers.

Once aboard the dhow, Decatur's boarding team determined that the dhow's crew lacked proper documentation of its nationality or cargo. Decatur's team then discovered 54 70-pound bags of hashish. An initial investigation uncovered clear ties be-

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U.S. Navy photo by PH2 Michael Sandberg

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Philippine Sea Crew Takes Down Drug Boats

By Lt. j.g. Barton Morrison

HSL-44 Public Affairs Officer

Ens. Jacqueline Hurley

USS Philippine Sea Public Affairs Officer

ABOARD USS PHILIPPINE SEA -- In the early morning hours of Dec. 20, a combined force including USS Philippine Sea (CG 58) Sailors and several coalition aircraft squadrons participated in the second significant drug seizure in the 5th Fleet region in the past week.

Philippine Sea boarding teams apprehended two cargo dhows in the Arabian Sea carrying millions of dollars worth of heroin

and methamphetamines. An investigation is underway to determine if the drugs have direct connections to Al-Qaida and the funding of terrorist operations.

Philippine Sea boarding teams and its helicopter squadron, Magnum 447 from Helicopter Anti-submarine, Light (HSL)-44, Detachment 3, pounced on the dhows at sunrise. While boarding teams approached the first dhow, Magnum hovered over to provide cover for team.

Magnum 447's helicopter mission commander observed that the crew of the dhow seemed overwhelmed by the high speed approach of Philippine Sea and the sudden ap-

pearance of his SH-60B helicopter.

"They appeared shocked," he recalled.

The first boarding team quickly took control of the dhow without incident. Within minutes the team was aboard and began their search. One of Philippine Sea's snipers was also tasked with providing cover during the mission.

"It was definitely an exciting experience. The entire time I had my weapon sighted on the dhow. The weapons training that I have had made me feel comfortable with my weapon if I was called upon to use it. At one point, the dhow began to close our ship

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Decatur - from front page

tween the smuggling operation and al-Qaida.

"This capture is indicative of the need for continuing maritime patrol of the Gulf in order to stop the movement of terrorists, drugs and weapons," said Rear Adm. Jim Stavridis, Commander, Enterprise Aircraft Carrier Strike Group. "This is a vital part of winning the global war on terror."

Future disposition of the dhow and its crew will be determined following coordination with investigation by legal authorities. The boarding was coordinated by Commander, Destroyer Squadron 18, embarked in the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise, operating in the Arabian Gulf. USS Decatur, a part of Expeditionary Strike Group One, is home ported in San Diego.



U.S. Navy photo by PH2 Michael Sandberg
A U.S. Navy boarding team operation from the guided missile destroyer USS Decatur (DDG 73) discovered over 50 bags of hashish, weighting 70 pound each, with a street value of around eight to ten million dollars aboard a 40-foot dhow intercepted in the Arabian Gulf.



<http://www.cusnc.navy.mil>



Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and Commander, U.S. 5th Fleet, is **Vice Adm. David C. Nichols, Jr.**

The Scimitar is an authorized publication for the men, women and families serving overseas in the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command area. The editorial content of The Scimitar is prepared, edited and provided by Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/Commander, U.S. Fifth Fleet Public Affairs Office. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the U.S. Navy and do not imply endorsement thereof.

Questions and comments can be directed to the Public Affairs Office. The Editor of the Scimitar can be reached at 724-510 or 724-027. Stories and input may be submitted via e-mail to: scimitar@cusnc.navy.mil.

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Philippine Sea - from front page

quickly and I recognized the possibility that I may have to open fire."

Philippine Sea's Officer of the Deck skillfully directed his bridge watch team from the ship.

"We devised a good plan, the watch team was well briefed, and we walked through our plan step by step. I expressed an exceptional well-done to my conning officer who expertly drove the ship into station just a few yards from each dhow at very high speed. With our training and cohesion, the watch team stepped up to the challenge and executed."

While the first dhow was being boarded, the second dhow attempted to flee.

Magnum 447 rapidly intercepted the second dhow and covered it until Philippine Sea's first boarding team reported all secure. Racing on again at flank speed, Philippine Sea quickly caught up with the second vessel and Philippine Sea's second boarding team took down the second dhow as quickly as the first.

"Everything went according to plan," said the boarding team's officer. "My team performed flawlessly and executed the boarding with precision. Everyone, from our boat coxswain to our air support, enabled the boarding team to embark quickly and safely. Once aboard it was only a matter of seconds before the boarding team was in complete control and the search could begin. It's rewarding to know that these drugs will never make it to their intended destination."

The team found several 30-50 lb. bags of heroin and amphetamines on board.

"The experience was intense," stated a member of the second boarding team. "I knew this was why I had signed up, and I was willing to do whatever necessary in order to protect the ship and take control of the

dhow. I felt an adrenaline rush and just my training and the experience I had gained from previous boarding evolutions."

Nearby, a Hawaii-based P-3C Orion patrol aircraft from VP-47 circled overhead. Shortly before Magnum arrived at the second dhow, the P-3 filmed the second boat throwing approximately 200 large bags of drugs overboard.

Philippine Sea's Tactical Action Officer during the mission, explained the events that preceded the take down.

"We sprinted 1100 miles in two days, exploiting information gathered by USS Decatur (DDG-73) during a bust several days earlier," he said. "After an extraordinary coordination effort by coalition aircraft, we were able to locate and tail both vessels through the night. Once we received the execute order, the ship closed at over 30 knots with the helicopter providing cover. Both boarding teams performed flawlessly."

"I believe we have done some great work here. The more we can do out here on the front lines, the better. People back home don't deserve this fight in their back yard."

"It was a flawless operation," remarked Philippine Sea's Commanding Officer, and the on-scene Commander. From the intelligence specialists to the boat coxswains to the Sailors manning the crew-served weapons, every man and woman performed brilliantly.

"Two years ago this ship fired the first salvo of Tomahawk missiles into Afghanistan to open the war on terror, and today we may very well have stopped hundreds of millions of dollars from replenishing Al-Qaida's coffers."

USS Philippine Sea (CG 58), a Ticonderoga class AEGIS guided missile cruiser homeport in Mayport, Fla., is part of the Enterprise Carrier Strike Group.

CJCS Hosts USO Tour, Visits Bahrain

By JO3 Shawnee McKain
Force Journalist
JO2 Tim Walsh
NSA Bahrain Public Affairs

MANAMA, Bahrain — The United Service Organizations (USO) brought together actor/comedian Robin Williams, World Wrestling Entertainment wrestler Kurt Angle and NASCAR driver Mike Wallace to put on a show Dec. 19 at Naval Support Activity Bahrain for the service members stationed there and throughout the U.S. 5th Fleet region.

Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Richard Myers hosted the group during their trip and also thanked the troops for their service during the holiday season.

The morning's show started with Vice Adm. David Nichols, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/Commander, U.S. 5th Fleet introducing himself and Myers.

"For those of you who don't know me," Nichols said to the crowd of mostly Sailors and Marines, "I'm your boss. And he's my boss," he said of Myers.

Myers briefly addressed the crowd, bringing thanks from home and a Merry Christmas to everyone, before introducing Kurt Angle, who won an Olym-

pic Gold Medal for wrestling at the 1996 games.

"It's hard work coming out here for a few days and doing USO shows," Angle said. "But it's nothing compared to the hard work you do out here every day."

The WWE superstar then introduced NASCAR #4 driver Mike Wallace.

Wallace also gave his thanks and brought gifts from his racing team to give out. Aided by Nichols and Angle, they threw T-shirts and hats into the crowd.

After getting the crowd warmed up, Wallace introduced a man whom he said needed no introduction: Robin Williams.

Williams started his skit with



U.S. Navy photo by JO1(SW) Dennis J Herring
Vice Adm. David C. Nichols, Jr., Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/Commander, 5th Fleet introduces Gen. Richard B. Myers, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, at an all-hands gathering Dec. 19.



U.S. Navy photo by JO1(SW) Dennis J Herring
Actor/comedian Robin Williams performs for the audience at an all-hands gathering Dec. 19 at Naval Support Activity Bahrain.

some jokes about current events, including the capture of Saddam Hussein.

When Williams finished his skit, the three sat on stage for more than an hour and posed for photos with anyone who wanted one. Off stage, Myers posed for photos, as well.

"I think it was great of them to take time from their schedule to come and put on a show for us," said Master-at-Arms Seaman Recruit Tim Beazley. "It was a surprise to me that they were coming, but they put on a really good show, and I was impressed."



U.S. Navy photo by JO1(SW) Dennis J Herring
NASCAR driver Mike Wallace, left, and WWE wrestler Kurt Angle speak with the audience at an all-hands gathering Dec. 19 at NSA Bahrain.



U.S. Navy photo by JO1(SW) Dennis J Herring
NASCAR driver Mike Wallace, right, introduces actor/comedian Robin Williams to the audience at an all-hands gathering Dec. 19

CG Change of Command and Farewell Thanks to Commodore

By PA2 Matthew Belson
USCG Forces Southwest Asia
Public Affairs

The blue waters of the Arabian Gulf provided a fitting setting for the time honored nautical tradition of the Change of Command Ceremony aboard the USCGC Baranof Dec. 17.

Lt. John Cole arrived last February in the Arabian Gulf as part of the Coast Guard deployment of four 110-foot Island Class patrol boats to support U.S. Navy and coalition forces in Operations Southern Watch and Enduring Freedom. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, Lt. Cole commanded the Baranof through mine-laden Iraqi waters to escort humanitarian relief ships. For this action Lt. Cole received the Bronze Star and was awarded along with the crew the Combat Action Ribbon. Since then, the Baranof, which is home ported in Miami, has supported Maritime Interception Operations searching for smugglers and terrorists.

"We've conducted more than 100 boardings since the summer and logged over 3,000 hours underway on patrol, and the big thing over here is to be adaptable as things can change 180° from one patrol to the next," said Lt. Cole. "This is a group of hardworking Coast Guardsmen," he added.

Assuming command of the Baranof is Lt. Cmdr. David Ramassini, who was last assigned to the United States Coast Guard Academy as the Senior Company Officer. Yet, Ramassini is no stranger to 110-foot patrol boats having commanded the USCGC Key Largo home ported in Key West, Fla., and he admits to looking forward to starting operations.

"It's not a big deal for the Coast Guard to shift from the shores of home to the shores of Iraq—this is right up our alley," said Ramassini of the Coast Guard's mission in the dangerous waters of the Arabian Gulf.

By coincidence, two previous commanders of the Baranof were also present at the ceremony, Capt. Kevin Quigley, Chief, Office of Defense Operations, and Lt. Cmdr. Christopher Hollingshead, Executive Officer for Coast Guard Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFOR SWA).

While Coast Guard Port Security units have operated in the Arabian Gulf since Operation Desert Storm, the presence of the four 110-foot cutters represents the first deployment of Coast Guard patrol boats overseas since the Vietnam War.

Presiding at the Baranof's Change of Command, Capt. John Peterson, Commander, Middle East Force, Commodore, Destroyer Squadron 50, applauded the Baranof's and the other Coast Guard patrol boats contributions to Navy's 5th Fleet operations.

"The Coast Guard's constabulary functions are reducing the general lawlessness in the area and helping to rebuild the Iraqi oil system by helping to eliminate oil smuggling," said Capt. Peterson, who has two years prior experience working with the Coast Guard during counter-drug operations as a Navy hydrofoil commander in District 7 headquartered in Miami. "I need rugged craft and rugged people and clearly the Island Class cutters do this job," he added.

Following the Change of Command Ceremony aboard the Baranof, Capt. Peterson, who is leaving his command as Commodore, was presented with a letter of thanks from Vice Adm. James Hull, Commander Coast Guard Atlantic Area, and a parting gift from Coast Guard PATFOR SWA at an All Hands meeting held at Naval Support Activity Bahrain.

"I had 17 ships from seven different nations working for me," said Peterson. "Ironically, my last time underway will be aboard the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Baranof."



U.S. Coast Guard photo by PA2 Matthew Belson
Capt. John Peterson, Commander, Middle East Force, Commodore, Destroyer Squadron 50 (L), applauds the new commanding officer of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Baranoff (WPB 1318), Lt. Cmdr. David Ramassini (C) and the outgoing commanding officer, Lt. John Cole (R) during the change of command ceremony. The Baranof is one of four Coast Guard 110-foot patrol boats deployed to the region to support U.S. Navy 5th Fleet and coalition forces Maritime Interdiction Operations.



Schedule of Special Religious Services For the Holiday Season

NSA CHAPLAINS' OFFICE

Tel. 439-4235 / 4303 or 17-854-235 / 303 (Sun – Thu)

Jewish Services:

- **Hanukkah** services will be held on Thursday, December 25, at 1900. For details and location phone the NSA Chaplains' Office at 439-4303.

Gospel Service:

- **New Year's Eve Watch Night Service**, 2100-0001 Wednesday, 31 December, Chapel /Training Center.

Protestant Services:

- Wednesday, December 24 (Christmas Eve), at 1900 in the Chapel/Training Center, the **Protestant Christmas Eve Service**, with the Hand-bell Choir and special music.

Catholic Services:

- Wednesday, December 24 (Christmas Eve), at 1730 in the Chapel/Training Center, **Vigil Mass for Christmas**.
- Thursday, December 25 (Christmas Day), at 000 (Midnight) in the Chapel/Training Center, **Christmas Midnight Mass**.
- Thursday, December 25 (Christmas Day), at 0930 in the Chapel/Training Center, **Mass of Christmas Day**.
- Friday, December 26, at 0930 in the Chapel/Training Center, **Feast of the Holy Family Mass** (Sunday after Christmas).
- Wednesday, December 31, at 1730 in the Chapel/Training Center, **Vigil Mass for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**.
- Thursday, January 1, at 0930 in the Chapel/Training Center, **Mass for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**.
- Friday, January 2, at 0930 in the Chapel/Training Center, **Mass for the Solemnity of the Epiphany** (Sunday following Jan. 1).

Port Royal's 'Deep Six' rocks on in Bahrain

By JO2 Timothy Walsh

Naval Support Activity, Bahrain
Public Affairs

USS Port Royal's (CG 73) ship's band fulfilled a dream by playing at the Desert Dome Dec. 18.

While in Bahrain for a port visit during the Port Royal's deployment, the ship's band, Deep Six, played a variety of rock and punk covers in addition to some material written by lead singer and guitarist Cryptologic Technician—Technical Seaman Apprentice Matthew Dunsford.

"I always wanted to play a larger venue," Dunsford said of performing before more than 250 Sailors and Marines. "But I never imagined something like this."

Usually Deep Six plays at steel beach picnics or during replenishments, but this was a first for the band that only formed at the beginning of the Pearl Harbor-based cruiser's deployment, which began in September.

The four-member band found there are some obstacles to being a group on an underway ship. According to Dunsford, finding time to practice and space to their equipment have been the biggest hurdles.

Even with all the work just to be a band, it has been worth it for Dunsford, who is on his first deployment.

He said that the together was "the first time I felt normal again, I felt at home."

Since the start of the deployment, Deep Six has practiced twice a week, yet weeks before their show at the Dome, the band tried to meet every day.

The Port Royal pulled into Bahrain on another port visit in early November and one night while at the Dome, the group joked about playing a concert here.

"It was kind of a pipe dream," Storekeeper 3rd Class Jacob Kunkel said of playing in Bahrain. "But the more we joked about it, the more we thought 'ya, we could do it.'"

After communicating with local Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) representative, the dream started to materialize. Julia Hatcher, the Fleet Recreation Coordinator; Dan Cook, the Region Entrainment Director, and Douglas Arnett, of food and beverage,



US Navy photo by JO2 Tim Walsh
USS Port Royal's (CG 73) ship band, Deep Six, plays at the Desert Dome Dec. 18. DC1(SW) Chris Carter, CTTSA Matthew Dunsford, SK3 Jacob Kunkel and OS1(SW) Ray Moore played before more than 250 Sailor and Marines.

supplied everything the band needed except the guitars – the band wanted to use their own.

"I couldn't imagine MWR being more supportive," said Damage Controlman (SW) 1st Class Chris Carter, group bassist and secondary vocals.

MWR Region Entrainment Director Dan Cook said it was worth the effort for both the band and the audience.

"It was great to have some American music on American soil," Cook said.



Command Religious Program Naval Support Activity Bahrain



Weekly Schedule of Events

Monday	1200 - Catholic Mass, Chaplain's Office Chapel Annex 1700 - Gospel Choir Practice, Chapel/Training Facility
Tuesday	1130 - Praise Ministry - Chapel Training Facility 1200 - Catholic Mass, Chaplain's Office Chapel Annex 1830 - Gospel Bible Study, Chaplain Parker's flat
Wednesday	1200 - Catholic Mass, Chapel/Training Facility 1630 - Catholic Choir Practice, Chapel/Training Facility 1730 - Protestant Choir Practice, Chapel/Training Facility 1830 - Gospel Choir Practice, Chapel/Training Facility 1830-2000 - Alien Youth Group Bible Study (grades 9-12), Bahrain School Room NTC 2000 - Gospel Praise Dancer's rehearsal, POC Elder Sorrells
Thursday	1130 - Praise Ministry- Chapel Training Facility 1200 - Catholic Mass, Chaplain's Office Chapel Annex 1630-1700 - Confessions, Chapel/Training Facility 1730 - Catholic Vigil Mass, Chapel/Training Facility 1830 - Gospel Intercessory Prayer Ministry, POC Miller 1830 - Children's Choir Practice - Chapel/Training Facility. POC Sister Diane
Friday	0815 - Catholic CCD classes. POC Monika Thompson 0930 - Catholic Mass, Chapel/Training Facility 0930 - Protestant Adult Friday School II in the CPO Lounge at the Dome 1100 - Protestant Worship Service, Chapel/Training Facility 1130 - Gospel Friday School Class, Navy College Classroom #2 1300 - Gospel Service, Chapel/Training Facility 1330 - Gospel Children's Church ages 5-10 in the CDC, POC Mrs. Fulson
Saturday	0730 - Protestant Single and Geo-Bachelor Men's Study in the Dome Conference room 1545 - Protestant Campaigner's Youth Bible Study, Bahrain School Rm 53 POC Ketan
Sunday	1200 - Catholic Mass, Chaplain's Office Chapel Annex 1800 - Protestant Evening Worship Service, Chapel/Training Facility 1900 - Gospel Praise Dancer's rehearsal, POC Elder Sorrells

Laypeople:

Muslim- CTCIM Young
Latter Day Saints- Cmdr. Hansen
Jewish- Lt. j.g. Frey
United Pentacostal- CW3 Moody

NSA Chaplain Staff:

Cmdr. Marshall, Command Chaplain
Lt. Johnson, Catholic Chaplain
RP2 Harris
RP3 McCalister
NAVCENT Chaplain Staff:
Capt. Tidd, Command Chaplain
Cmdr. Pugliese, Catholic Chaplain
RPC Ponce
RP2 Mosqueda

Questions regarding Command Religious Programs, please contact NSA Bahrain Chaplain's office at 439-4235/4303 or 724-235/303, Sunday – Thursday.

Event participation contingent upon Force Protection Conditions